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DESIGNING AN INTERACTIVE MEETING OR WORKSHOP

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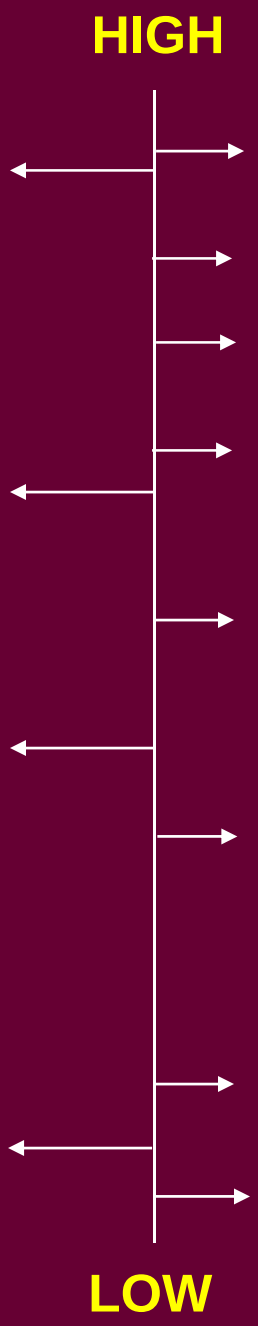
LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

PARTICIPATORY TECHNIQUE



Agreeing to the decision

Having an influence upon the decision

Being heard before the final decision is made

Being informed about the decision being made

Joint Decision Making

Assisted Negotiations

Collaboration/Mediation

Facilitation/Interactive Workshops

Task Forces/Advisory Groups

Public hearings

Conferences, symposia

Public information

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PROBLEMS WITH PUBLIC HEARINGS AND LARGE MEETINGS

- Easily “captured” by small but organized activist groups
- Don’t permit dialogue or interaction
- You don’t hear from most people in the audience
- People who come to get information may have to listen to hours of speeches just to get the few pieces of information that they want

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GOALS OF AN INTERACTIVE MEETING

- Reduce “speechifying” and posturing
- Get many more people involved
- Get interaction between people with different viewpoints
- Produce a “product,” e.g., develop lists of brainstorming items, rank items

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TYPES OF INTERACTIVE MEETINGS

- Large meeting, work-at-the tables:
  - Plenary session;
  - Discussions at tables to complete an assignment;
  - Plenary session for report outs and general discussion

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TYPES OF INTERACTIVE MEETINGS - Continued

- Large group, small group meetings:
  - Plenary session,
  - Audience divided into small groups (possibly using color coding or other systems to create heterogeneous groups) which complete an assignment;
  - Plenary session for report outs and discussion

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LARGE GROUP - ROOM ARRANGEMENTS

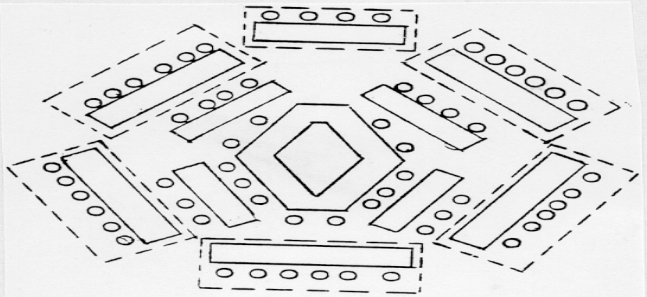
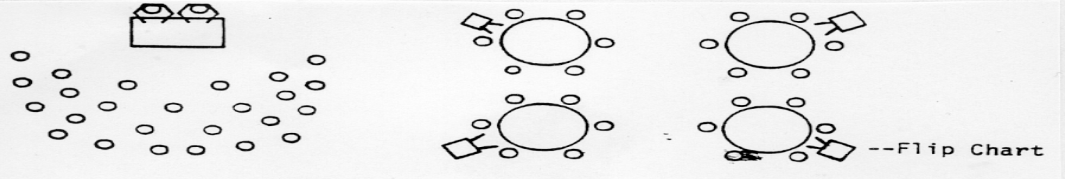


Figure F



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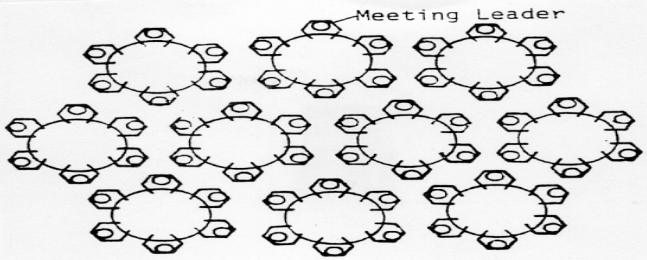

Figure H

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TYPES OF INTERACTIVE MEETINGS - Continued

- Workshops: Smaller group, may work as a single group, or use some version of small group format

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SMALLER GROUP – ROOM ARRANGEMENTS

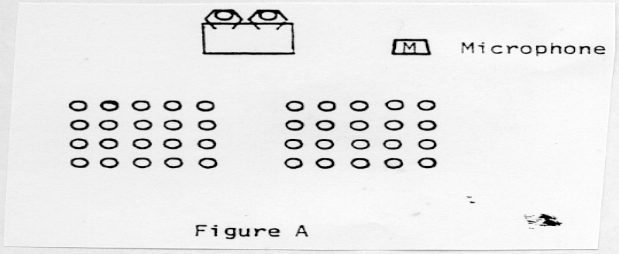
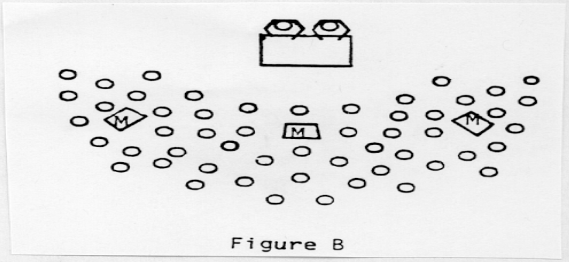


Figure A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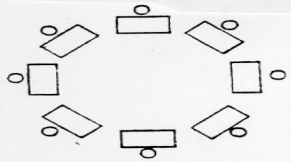
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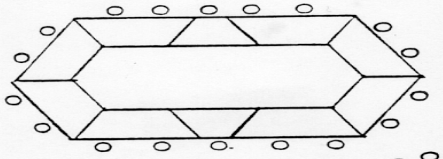
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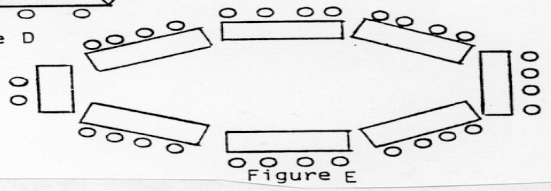
Figure E

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TYPES OF INTERACTIVE MEETINGS - Continued

- Open houses:
  - Drop-in during announced hours
  - “Stations” set up, organized around key topics with an expert on that topic at the station;
    - flip chart for recording comments;
    - chairs at each station to permit small group discussion.
  - Can be an adjunct to other kinds of meetings
  - Do not necessarily result in a product

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OPEN HOUSE

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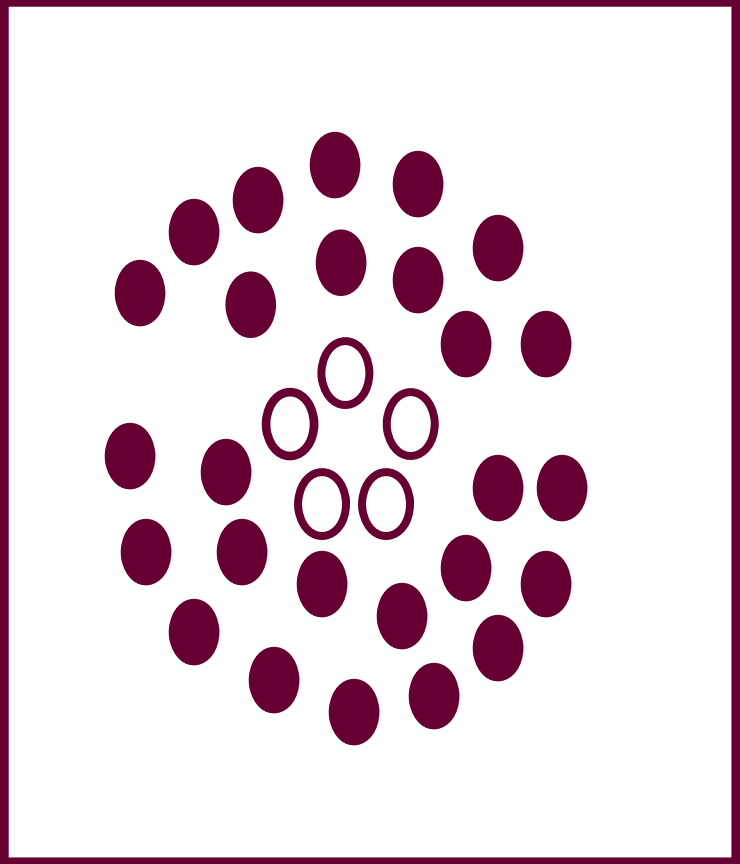
SAMOAN CIRCLE



- “Inner circle” surrounded by chairs in concentric rows with open aisles permitting access to inner circle
- Complete freedom of interaction within the inner circle
- If you want to speak, get up and move to inner circle

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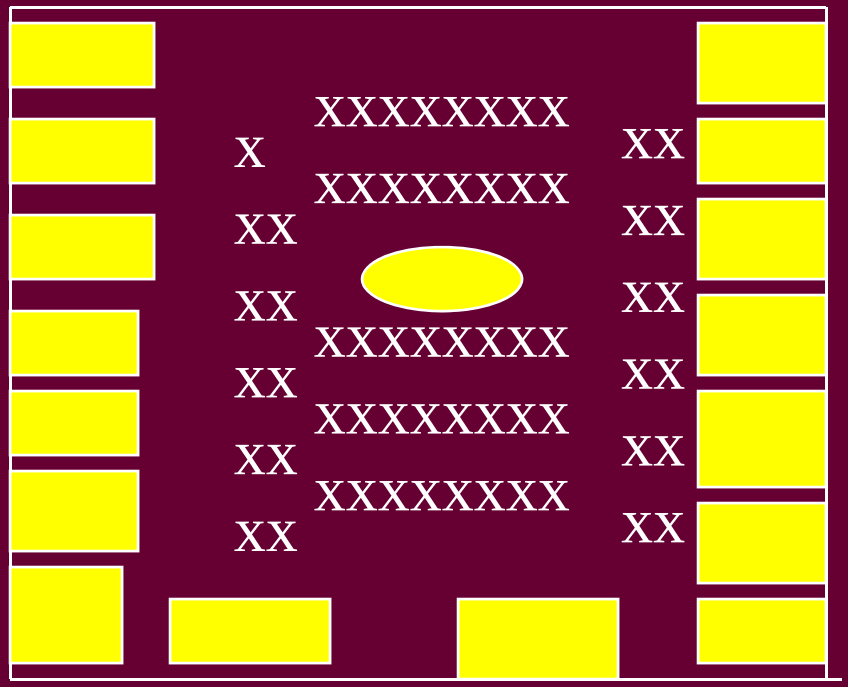
OPEN SPACE

- Plenary session during which any participant can announce a topic
- Room assigned to each topic
- Wall charts for sign-ups
- Person who announced the topic serves as the meeting convener
- Participants move around from group to group as they wish
- Plenary report-back
- Convener prepares summary of his\her group



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DECIDING WHAT KIND OF MEETING YOU NEED

FORMAT FOLLOWS FUNCTION

Is this meeting for:

- **Information giving**
- **Information receiving**
- **Interaction**
- **Consensus formation/negotiation**
- **Summarizing**

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WHEN WORKSHOPS MAKE SENSE

- You want high levels of interaction
- You want a “product” outcome
- Stakeholders need to interact with each other
- The numbers of interested people is small enough that a workshop – or several workshops – will handle them

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DESIGNING WORKSHOPS

- Facilitated
- Ideal size - 12-15 (but usually larger)
- Duration - 2-3 hours (or more)
- Ways to handle more people:
  - Repeated workshops
  - Daytime/evening workshops
  - Interest groups select representatives

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DESIGNING WORKSHOPS - Continued

- **Typical Structure:**
  - **Orientation**
  - **Group activity to complete a product, e.g. brainstorming lists of alternatives then rankling them**
  - **Group discussion**

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WHEN INTERACTIVE LARGE GROUP MEETINGS MAKE SENSE

- You want interaction
- You want stakeholders to interact with each other
- The number of participants is large
- You want high visibility

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GRAB BAG OF INTERACTIVE TECHNIQUES

- Brainstorming
- Post-it blizzard
- Nominal group process
- Colored dots – “dot democracy”
- Allocate $ (allocate $100 between alternatives)
- Likert scales
- Normative guides

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NOMINAL GROUP PROCESS

- Opening presentation
- Pose an activating question
- Break into small groups/work at tables
- Introductions
- Silent generation
- Record ideas on flip-chart
- Clarify ideas
- Prioritize ideas
- Discuss of results

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BENEFITS OF INTERACTIVE TECHNIQUES

- To help groups develop a group identity and grow as a group
- To have groups “own” their own tools of evaluation
- To help groups take stock in a non-threatening way

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DOT DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

INSTRUCTIONS: ***You have three dots, distribute them any why you like; all three on 1 or two on one a one on another, etc.***

Statement 1 xxxxxxx

Statement 2 xx

Statement 3 xxxxxxxxxx

Statement 4 xx

Statement 5 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Statement n x

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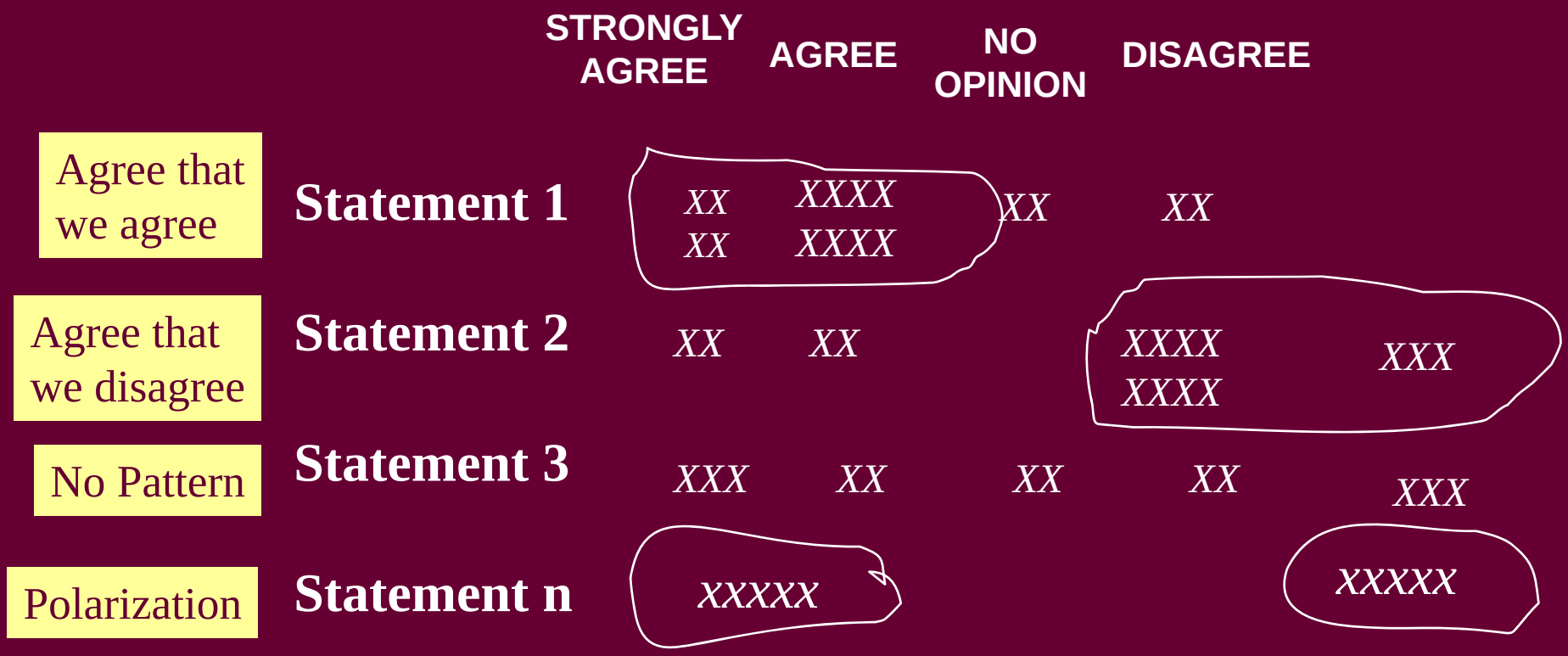
USING LIKERT SCALES

Q. How do you feel about the following statements?



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EXAMPLE: CREATING THE GLOBAL WATER PARTNERSHIP Stockholm '96

Q1. Concept of Creating a Partnership

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
xxx	xxxxxxx	xxxxx		
	xxxxxxx	xxxxx	x	
x	xxxx	xx		
x	xxxxxxxx	xxx	xxx	
xxxxx	xxxxx	xxx	x	

x=Dev(12) x=Mulitlaterals(15) x=Bilaterals(14) x=NGOS(7) x=other(13)

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EXAMPLE: GLOBAL WATER PARTNERSHIP

Q2. Management Report

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
	xxxxxxxx	xx	xxxxxxx	
	xxxxxx		x	
	xxxx	x	x	
	xxxxxx	xx	x	
	xxxxxxxxxx	x		

x=Dev(12) x=Mulitlaterals(15) x=Bilaterals(14) x=NGOS(7) x=other(13)

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EXAMPLE: THE GLOBAL WATER PARTNERSHIP

Q3. Mission Statement

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
xx	xxxx			
xxxxx	xxxxxxxxxxx	x	x	
xxx	xx	x		
xx	xxxxxx	x		
xxx	xxxxxxx			

x=Dev(12) x=Mulitlaterals(15) x=Bilaterals(14) x=NGOS(7) x=other(13)

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Partnering Evaluation Form

	Low	Below Average	Above Average	Average Excell	
Teamwork					
Understanding “others”					
Walk the Talk					
Mutual Respect					
Openness					
Honesty					
Professionals					
Quality of synergy					
Trust					
Effective Communication					
Responsiveness					
Issues/conflict Resolution					
Goal Clarity					

Total: _____Average_____

Observations:

Plans to implement:

1. (Low) consistently fails to meet expectation of Partnering team
2. (Below Average) Occasionally fails to met expectations of partnering team
3. (Average) Meets expectations of Partnering team
4. (Above Average) Occasionally exceed expectations of Partnering Team
5. (Excellent) Consistently exceeds expectations of Partnering team

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ADDED DIMENSIONS AT GLOBAL CONFERENCES

- Multiple languages – simultaneous translation over earphones
- Use of technology for visual recording: white boards, interactive computers, plasma screens, etc.

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AN EXAMPLE: NATIONAL LISTENING SESSIONS

Purpose of sessions was to get input on the following questions:

1. **What are the key water challenges facing our country (this region)?**
2. **Why is it a problem? What impact is the problem already having or is likely to have?**
3. **What actions should we take to respond to the challenge?**
4. **Who should take these actions? What should the Federal government do? What can you and your organizations do?**

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NATIONAL LISTENING SESSIONS

- Continued

- Audience size variable: 50 – 500 (and no way to know for sure until the day of the event)
- HQ wanted to use the same meeting format in each workshop to ensure data would be comparable

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NATIONAL LISTENING SESSIONS

- Continued

- **FORMAT**
  - Opening presentation by Commander
  - Assignment-at-tables:
    - Introduce around table
    - Silently generate issues/challenges in their region
    - Go around table, one idea as a time
    - Educate each other about the issue
    - Pick 5-6 most important issues
  - Plenary – Reports from Small Groups
  - Issues posted on walls – vote with dots
  - Break or lunch

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NATIONAL LISTENING SESSIONS

- Continued

- **FORMAT – Continued**
  - **Plenary: Select topics for group discussions**
  - **Assign each agree-upon topic to a table**
  - **Go to the table with the topic that interests you the most**
  - **At each table, develop an action plan for your issue**
  - **Plenary: Reports on action plans**
  - **Closing summary by Commander**

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TEAM EXERCISE

- Complete instructions are on page
- Your team will be assigned a topic and meeting purpose
- Design a workshop or interactive large group meeting to achieve the meeting purpose